
**SOCIAL STUDIES: A PANACEA IN MANAGING THE
MENACE OF KIDNAPPING AND ABDUCTION OF
SCHOOL CHILDREN IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper examined Social Studies as a Panacea in Managing the Menace of Abduction of School Children in Nigeria. The threat of students' abduction from schools is growing nowadays, schools all over Nigeria become spineless targets for insurgents and bandits, resulting in the abduction of thousands of students. Within the last five years approximately one thousand, one hundred and fifteen (115) students were abducted from twelve public and private secondary schools including one more tertiary institution across northern states. About \$18.34 million United States dollars was paid to kidnappers as ransom within the last twelve years indicating that kidnapping is becoming more profitable venture. Nigeria's unemployment rate rose from 18.8 percent in the third quarter of 2017 to 23.1 percent in the third quarter of 2018. The empirical studies revealed that, the major causes of kidnapping are

unemployment, poverty, corruption, illiteracy, leadership failure, inadequate laws to deal with kidnappers, high cost of living are some of the factors responsible for kidnapping and abduction school children. Social Studies was discovered to be one of the powerful disciplines that would provide the Nigeria child with appropriate and relevant skills, confidences, competencies and values which are employable in order to contribute their quota to national development. The paper recommended that, Job creation for the citizenry exclusively the youths, arrest, prosecute and give stiff-jail sentences to those planning an adventure in kidnapping and also, Social Studies should be made compulsory subject to be offered by all students at all levels of education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social Studies, Abduction, School Children, Kidnapping.

Introduction

The greatness of any nation depends on the genius, qualities, attitudes and aspirations of her people and it cannot expect to be ignorant and free at the same time. Education can therefore be defined as the process of developing an individual's mental, social, emotional, spiritual and political intelligence through the provision of requisite information and circumstances that enables this (Kobani & Nkpolu, 2014). Social Studies as a school subject is destined to develop in learners the right type of values, attitudes and socially acceptable behaviours such as honesty, dedication, hard work, respect for elders, loyalty, and respect for human dignity among others (Oluwagbohunmi & Alonge, 2019). The aim of Social Studies is to inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes and values needed for the survival of the individual in society (Lawal & Oyeleye, 2003). The objectives of Social Studies are stipulated in the National Policy on Education and these are the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). This clarifies that Social Studies is a powerful school subject that

promotes in the learners virtues or skills to eliminate prejudice, suspicious, hatred, fear, dismantling of primordial affinities, positive inter-personal, intergroup, and inter-ethnic relations, loyalty to a central authority, cooperation, sense of unity, peaceful co-existence and harmony (Mezeiobi, 2014; Kadiri, 2020).

The incidents of kidnapping began in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as a freedom fight by militants group protesting the degradation of their environment by oil industry activities. Demola (2011) states that it soon turned into a money-making avenue through the kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for huge ransoms. This implies that kidnapping has become a daily occurrence and it has spread throughout the six geo-political zones. Nigeria was ranked the world over as the 6th of the top 10th kidnap-rated countries in the world, coming after Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Philippines in 2012 (Chukwudum & Amalachukwu, 2017). Also, the Nigeria's national rate of kidnapping in 2013 is 0.001 per 100,000 population (Knoema, 2019, Ibrahim & Ahmed, 2020).

The abduction of teachers and students from school is at high alarming rate in northern Nigeria. Thus, the United Nations Children and Education Fund (UNICEF) (2021) reported that, nearly 1,436 school children and 17 teachers were abducted from Nigeria schools between December 2020 and October 2021. Accordingly, daily trust Saturday (26th December, 2021) reported that, the spate of abductions of students, mostly from boarding schools, has seen the closure of several schools in the north states. Also, most of the 13 million out-of-school children in Nigeria are believed to be from that area.

Thus, it is the target of this paper to underpin the key negative effects which the continued kidnapping and abduction of school children from schools has on the Nigerian child especially the girls. This paper seeks to examine the various implication of kidnapping and abduction of school children in Northern Nigeria, and its attendants' effects on educational development and what should be the role of Social Studies in addressing this threat? Finding answers to these principal questions constitute the primary focus of this paper.

Causes of Kidnapping and Abduction of School Children in Northern Nigeria

Scholars define Kidnapping and abduction interchangeably, thus, Kidnapping is seen as an act of taking a way person's unlawfully and keep them a hostage especially, to get a ransom. Uchenna and Sorochi (2014), Abdulkabir (2017) define kidnapping as an illicit incident, through which human-being is forcefully abducted to an unknown area against their will by another human-being because of the reason best known to them. This implies that, kidnapping can be relates with hostage taking and hijacking of human-being for economic and political reasons. The following are the various categories of kidnapping according to empirical papers that were reviewed on the causes of kidnapping in Nigeria thus: Domestic relation kidnapping, abortive ransom kidnapping, developmental ransom kidnapping, miscellaneous kidnapping, kidnapping for robbery, kidnapping for murder (non-sexual assault), child stealing, kidnapping for rape sexual assault, express kidnapping, political kidnapping, tiger kidnapping.

The following empirical studies were reviewed mainly to find out the major causes of kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria. The study of Wayas, Selvadurai and Awang (2019) investigated the youth unemployment and terrorism in Nigeria: The Case of "Boko Haram. The study revealed that high rate of youth unemployment in northeast Nigeria has provided foot soldiers for the Boko Haram elites. Ezemenaka's (2018) study on kidnapping: a security challenge in Nigeria, investigated the causes of kidnapping and ritual kidnapping in Nigeria, the information gathered from the clergies revealed that some 'men of God' engage in ritual human sacrifice in order to attract many members to attend their churches. A closer study was conducted by Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014) on the subject of kidnapping and hostage-taking in South-eastern Nigeria. The was study limited to Southern Nigeria, where the causal factors might be limited to economic while the dominant factor for kidnapping in the South-south is on environmental struggle and in the North-west and North-east the causes of kidnapping and terrorism are attributed to illiteracy and abject

poverty respectively. Similarly, Uchenna (2014) investigated salient social and demographic characteristics as determinants of kidnapping in the South-eastern States of contemporary Nigeria using inmates detained on the grounds of kidnapping in Abakaliki and Umuahia Prisons as a unit of analysis. The study revealed that certain social and demographic characteristics such as age, occupation, gender, social background, marital status, education and the like are responsible for kidnapping in Nigeria. Inyang & Abraham (2013) investigated the problem of kidnapping and its consequences on Nigerians in general and Uyo dwellers in particular. The study reveals that the proliferation of kidnapping in Uyo metropolis has little to do with political activities, rather the main motive is economic gain by way of ransom payment of money. Maxwell (2011) studied the menace of kidnapping in Abia State: a study on the strategic role of religion in the amelioration of violent crimes. The study reveals that, the causative factors were on the notions of economic injustice and deprivation. The findings of the above studies revealed that, unemployment, abject poverty, corruption, moral decadence, indiscipline, inflation, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inadequate of security personnel, poor motivation of law enforcement agency, loss of societal value and get rich quick syndrome among others.

Table 1: Incidents of Kidnapping and Abduction of Schools children from school in Nigeria between 2014-2021

S/N	Year	Name Schools	No of Students Abducted	States
1.	2014	Government Girls Secondary School Chibok.	276	Borno State
2.	2016	Government Vocational School, Rijau.	2	Niger State
3.	2016	State Model College, Igbonla.	4	Lagos State
4.	2018	Government Girls' Science and Technical College Dapchi.	110	Yobe State
5.	2018	Maiduguri Capital School.	2	Borno State
6.	2019	Engravers College, Kakau Daji.	6	Kaduna State
7.	2020	Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kakau.	4	Kaduna State
8.	2020	Prince Academy Secondary School, Damba-Kasaya.	4	Kaduna State
9.	2020	Government Science Secondary School Kankara.	344	Katsina State
10.	2020	Dandume Islamiyya School.	80	Katsina State
11.	2020	Government Science College Kagara.	42	Niger State
12.	2020	Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe.	279	Zamfara State
13.	2021	Federal College of Forestry Mechanization Afaka.	39	Kaduna State
Total	12		1,115	

The kidnapping and abduction of students especially the girls from school in Northern Nigeria was aimed at disrupting the effort of governments towards heightening western education by the militants group in the area. The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2018) reports that, Boko Haram crisis has extensively expanded the severity of all challenges against formal education in the region. Schools have been the primary, constant targets of the Boko Haram violence, resulting in the complete destruction and abandonment of many formal education facilities and systems, the mass out-migration of qualified teachers ... increased population density in many urban areas due to displacement and the

consequent decrease in access to education. *“Hauwa M., a 16-year-old student in 2014 when Boko Haram attacked the Federal Government College in Buni Yadi, reported: After the attack, I went home. I was too afraid and decided not to go back. I told my parents I would never go back to school. They were also too afraid.... Before [the attack], I was so passionate to study and achieve my dream [of being a lawyer]. But now, this experience completely demoralized me.... I told my father that I will never go back because of Boko Haram threats and what I saw that night. I cannot go back to face the same thing again” (Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, 2018).*

Effects of Kidnapping and Abduction of School Children on Educational Development

The importance of education in societal development cannot be overemphasized. No country can meet its true potential if the educational sector is not developed. The National Policy on Education (2013) states that, education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society. It is the foundation for nation building. The education system in northeastern Nigeria was already fragile before the conflict with Boko Haram began, with significant numbers of children never attending school and large numbers dropping out without completion of secondary school. Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (2018) further adds that, due to the high rates of poverty, many parents could not afford to send their children to school because of the costs of education, including school fees, uniforms, and textbooks. regrettably, some parents were in resistant in sending their ward to formal schools long before the emergence of Boko Haram. According to Sanni (2015), north-east region has been greatly affected by suicide bombing, kidnapping and attacks by militant groups particularly the boko haram group and this is responsible for the north-east part of Nigeria recording the highest levels of school child illiteracy in the country. It can therefore be deduced that the resultant effect of kidnapping on the education of the school child include low turn-out as well as

increasing numbers of illiterates thereby limiting their possible contribution to societal, economic and political growth. It is imperative to understand that if Nigerian youths who are graduating remain unemployed, the needs to redirect and reorient them to become effective citizens that are rational thinkers and intelligent social actors that will not join the rank and files of insurgents, kidnappers, child abduction, militarism and those that would involve themselves in one form of social vices or the other.

The paper revealed that the incidents of kidnapping began in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as a freedom fight by militants group protesting the degradation of their environment by oil industry activities on January 11th 2006. And it later turned into a money-making avenue through the kidnapping of expatriate oil workers for huge ransoms, and nowadays students from school and nearly 1,436 school children and 17 teachers were abducted from Nigeria schools between December 2020 and October 2021. Nigeria was ranked the world over as the 6th of the top 10th kidnap rated countries in the world, coming after Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and Philippines in 2012. Six empirical papers were reviewed mainly to find out the major causes of kidnapping phenomenon in Nigeria, and the findings discovered that, unemployment, abject poverty, corruption, moral decadence, indiscipline, inflation, poor standard of living, high cost of living, inadequate of security personnel, poor motivation of law enforcement agency, loss of societal value and get rich quick syndrome among others.

The Place of Social Studies in Addressing the Menace of Kidnapping and Abduction of School Children in Northern Nigeria

According to Mezeiobi (2014) Nigeria is a Melting Pot of 619 ethnic groups in the country. Therefore, Social Studies can help greatly to educate the youths on the importance of peace and security in our dear nation. Social Studies as a subject bring about all round development in human beings. It encourages moral traits, values, such as responsibility, reliability, hard-work, humility, dedication to

duties, patriotism, selflessness, discipline, integrity, dignity, social justice, self-reliance, religious tolerance, patience, perseverance, peaceful co-existence, respect for elders, other peoples' opinions and constituted authorities among others. Social Studies are a wholesome study of human beings that attempts to proffer solutions to crucial problems facing individuals and the society at large (Abdul Kabir, 2014 & Abdu-Raheem, 2018).

One of the components of Social Studies that can be used to achieve these laudable objectives is Multicultural Education. scholars suggest that, Multicultural Education is a set of strategies and materials in education that were developed to assist teachers to promote democracy while responding to the many issues created by rapidly changing demographics of their students (Banks, 2008). More so, Multicultural education maintains that all students should have equal opportunities to learn regardless of racial, ethnic social-class or gender group to which they belong (Ojebiyi & Salako, 2016). Similarly, through this approach national consciousness and unity and integration can be inculcated in the learners (Kazi, 2016). This is because multicultural education is centred on ethnic composition of the country, contribution of each ethnic group to the so called "national cake, the development of polity culture like modes of dressing, hair-do, songs, dance, food, encouragement of inter-ethnic marriages among the citizens, social classes in the society (upper, middle and lower) with their attendant characteristics. The Need for Multicultural Curriculum, to prepare students for diverse work places and multicultural environment, to expose biases, stereotypes and politics that can restrict achievement, content is fair, accurate and inclusive, accommodates diverse teaching and learning styles for teachers and students, help students, faculty and staff to become advocates of multicultural awareness, expanding curriculum to include a variety of different groups and to provide students with a more holistic understanding of subject areas (Ojebiyi & Salako, 2016).

Conclusion

Social Studies is a wholesome study of human beings that attempts

to proffer solutions to crucial problems facing individuals and the society at large. The paper concludes that if Social Studies is taught as a separate school subject and properly taught it could help the learners to develop and learners the right type of values, attitudes and socially acceptable behaviours such as honesty, dedication, hard work, respect for elders, loyalty, and respect for human dignity among others. One of the components of Social Studies that can be used to achieved the objectives is Multicultural Education is a set of strategies and materials in education that were developed to assist teachers to promote democracy while responding to the many issues created by rapidly changing demographics of their students.

Way Forward

To end the Menace of students Kidnapping from Schools in Nigerian, the following measures were recommended: government should effectively implements rule of law to every citizenry, job creation and generation for the citizenry especially the youths, arrest, prosecute and give stiff-jail sentences, this will serve as deterrent to those planning an adventure in Kidnapping and Social Studies Education should be made compulsory courses to be offered by all students at all levels of education in Nigeria. these would the learners to develop and promotes democratic values such as honesty, dedication, hard work and respect for human dignity.

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